

# CLAIN PILATES+



## Pilates for Back Pain Relief!

Pilates is the safest way to improve chronic back pain relief by strengthening your core muscles and stretching tight muscle groups that restrict movement.

In the Fall of 2008, Scott had been in such back pain that he was confined to a couch. He was having pain due to a herniated disc that radiated from his lower back and shot down the side of his leg. He was hesitant to move. Scott had tried going to Doctors, Chiropractors, and Physical Therapy but he was not getting any lasting relief. Desperate for relief and a solution to his condition he thought he would try Pilates. As he was overweight and did not enjoy exercise, he was reluctant at first.

Scott also said that he thought Pilates was only for women, as all the images he'd seen were of girls in two piece swimsuits with perfect Abs. It was only through his wife's insistence and his own frustration with his situation that he finally came to see me.

At first he was afraid to move at all. We started all movements very slowly on the Pilates Table or Cadillac as is perfect for a person with pain concerns.



Cadillac w/Roll Down Bar

The Cadillac is based on a four poster hospital bed. While holding onto a Roll Down Bar, (a bar with springs) to lower his back down on the table gently and working his abdominal muscles, lying down on



Reformer Leg presses

his back one bone of his spine at a time, he could control the descent with the bar. The spring's resistance helped him to come back up without straining his back. This way he was able to trust and relax his body.

Next we had Scott lie down on a Pilates Reformer, again this was comfortable for his back, Scott was able to press his body weight on a platform against the resistance of springs, stretching out the back of his legs in the process. We performed 10 repetitions with 4 different foot positions. This strengthened his thighs and lower legs while stretching out his calves. Scott had very developed (tight) calf muscles. He was not very active, yet he would tighten his lower legs when he worked at his desk, this was a place where he held tension.

We then had him seated on the reformer again stretching out his legs, but this time stretching out his lower back and bending his knees with his torso in a flexed position. In a Modified position of course. (Stomach Massage Series). We respected his concerns about any back pain and we were able to add some small torso rotations or twists.



Monkey position

We added standing stretches at the ladder barrel, on the ladder side and then the standing tree stretches on the barrel side. In my opinion this apparatus is under utilized. Lastly we went back to the Cadillac and had Scott lying supine stretching his hamstrings while pushing his right foot up against the Tower. (Monkey position) Before we knew it his first session was over.

**This feels good!**

**When** Scott came to his next session, we made an agreement that at the onset of any pain we would stop and move on to something else, to return to that movement at another time. This way the following sessions proved to be helpful to relieve his fear and discomfort. After 5 sessions he acknowledged that he was feeling much better and his confidence had improved. We continued to take care not to push him and respect his pain.

Scott continued to feel better with each subsequent session. Movements that he was afraid of performing were now easy to accomplish. We continued to perform exercises to stretch his hamstrings and loosen up his lower back. He was able to straighten out his legs much more easily, and more importantly he could play with his young son without fear of recurring back pain.

## **Success!**

To see Scott a year later is to see a new man. He can now move freely and perform challenging exercises easily. He can go on with his life without having back pain for long periods of time. He had one recurrence of back pain, which he was able to manage by stretching at home daily and he was fine after only one week of pain. We began with 3 private sessions a week to start for one month then two sessions a week for another three months. He continues to have a session (he can work in a Trio setting) at least once a week sometimes, twice whenever he can.

Not enough Men take advantage of Pilates as a method of Body Conditioning. Joseph Pilates was a boxer, and New York City dancers and choreographers first recognized his Method as a perfect way to heal injuries and get themselves in better shape for their performances. Pilates is excellent for toning the entire body, so people look incredibly fit. The Pilates Method is intended to enhance all aspects of a person's life physically, (being stronger and more flexible), and mentally (developing greater control over the mind and body).